

Message Text

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53

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

NEAE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 SAB-01

SAM-01 SY-10 SCCT-02 OPR-02 ACDA-19 CCO-00 DRC-01

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O R 071446Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1747

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USINT DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1343

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SY, IS

SUBJECT: SYRIAN TREATMENT OF JEWISH COMMUNITY AND ISRAELI
REACTIONS

REF: DAMASCUS 197 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: ATROCITY AGAINST FOUR JEWISH GIRLS IN SYRIA
(REFTEL) HAS NOT YET BEEN PUBLICIZED IN ISRAEL, BUT WHEN THIS
HAPPENS, STRONG EMOTIONAL REACTION IS TO BE EXPECTED. IT WILL
UNDOUBTEDLY FEED DEMAND CURRENTLY BEING HEARD HERE THAT GOI
USE DISENGAGEMENT TALKS TO PURSUE RIGHT OF FREE EMIGRATION FOR
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SYRIAN JEWS. IT COULD LEAD TO DEMAND THAT ISRAEL NOT ENGAGE IN

ANY DISENGAGEMENT TALKS WITH SYRIA. AT LEAST SOME HEAT COULD BE REMOVED IF SYRIAN GOVT PUBLICLY AND IMMEDIATELY DENOUNCED ATROCITY, WHICH I SHOULD THINK WOULD BE IN SYRIA'S BEST INTEREST. END SUMMARY.

2. AS I AM SURE DEPT WILL AGREE, TIMING OF THIS TRAGIC ATROCITY AGAINST FOUR JEWISH GIRLS IN SYRIA OVER WHICH DAMASCUS JEWS ATTEMPTED TO DEMONSTRATE MARCH 5 (PLUS REPORT THAT SYRIAN POLICE USED STRONG-ARM MEASURES TO STOP DEMONSTRATION) IS VERY BAD INDEED FROM VIEWPOINT OF US MID EAST SETTLEMENT EFFORTS. SO FAR AS WE CAN TELL, WORD OF ATROCITY AND ATTEMPTED DEMONSTRATION HAS NOT YET REACHED ISRAEL, AND IT HAS NOT YET APPEARED HERE IN PRESS, BUT WE ARE FAIRLY CERTAIN IT WIL IN A DAY OR TWO. WHEN IT DOES, IT WILL PRODUCE STRONG EMOTIONAL REACTION BECAUSE OF HISTORY OF SYRIAN MALTREATMENT OF JEWS AND ISRAELI ENMITY TOWARD AND SUSPICION OF SYRIANS. IT MAY LEAD FOR EXAMPLE TO BLISTERING SPEECHES ON KNESSET FLOOR AND POSSIBLY TO DEMANDS THAT GOI NOT PARTICIPATE FOR TIME BEING IN ANY DISCUSSIONS ON SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT.

3. RAFTEL NOTES THAT BODIES OF THE 4 JEWISH GIRLS HAD BEEN BURNED AND MUTILATED. WE FEAR THAT FACT OF MUTILATION WILL GREATLY RAISE LEVEL OF EXPECTED ISRAELI POPULAR ANGER. ISRAELIS WOULD BE INCLINED TO SUSPECT THE VERY WORST EVEN IF THIS WERE NOT, AS REFTEL SAYS IT IN FACT IS, RELIABLE INFO. DEPT WILL RECALL THAT EARLY DURING OCTOBER WAR, STORIES CIRCULATED IN ISRAEL ABOUT ALLEGED GANG RAPES AND MUTILATIONS OF CAPTURED ISRAELI GIRL SOLDIERS BY SYRIAN TROOPS (TEL AVIV 8042), WHICH DAYAN THEN DENIED.

4. NEWS OF ATROCITY WILL ALSO UNDOUBTELY FEED DEMAND CURRENTLY BEING HEARD IN ISRAEL THAT GOI USE DISENGAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS WITH SYRIA TO OBTAIN RIGHT OF FREE EMIGRATION FOR SYRIAN JEWS. ACCORDING TO PRESS MRS MEIR SET STAGE LAST OCTOBER FOR SUCH DEMAND BY A REMARK THAT ISRAEL AFTER WAR WOULD CONCERN ITSELF WITH FATE NOT ONLY OF ISRAELI POWS IN SYRIA, BUT ALSO OF SYRIAN JEWS. HAARETZ COMMENTARY MARCH 3 AND DAVAR EDITORIAL MARCH 6 TOOK UP THE CRY, AND LIKUD MEMBER ADDRESSED DEMAND TO EBAN ON KNESSET FLOOR MARCH 6 THAT WOI MAKE PUBLIC WHAT POLITICAL MOVES IT HAS UNDERTAKEN TO HELP SYRIAN JEWS. EBAN (ACCORDING TO PRESS) REPLIED THAT GOI WOULD DEMAND IN DISENGAGEMENT TALKS THAT

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SYRIA REVERSE ITS POLICY OF OPPRESSING JEWS, BUT HE AVOIDED SPECIFICS

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5. IT OCCURS TO ME THAT AT LEAST SOME HEAT COULD BE TAKEN OUT OF ISRAELI REACTION IF SYRIAN GOVERNMENT, WITHOUT AWAITING BAD WORLD PRESS IT IS GOING TO GET AS SOON AS NEWS OF ATROCITY SPREADS, WERE TO DENOUNCE ATROCITY PUBLICLY. I THINK A GOOD CASE COULD BE MADE TO SYRIANS THAT SUCH MOVE WOULD BE IN THEIR BEST INTEREST, AND

THAT IF THEY DO NOT MAKE SUCH MOVE, PROSPECTS FOR
DISENGAGEMENT WILL HAVE BEEN HARMED.
KEATING

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